

July 16, 1959

Allyn D. Bainbridge,
Farm Placement Representative,
California State Department of Employment,
4631 E. Fremont St.,
Stockton, California

Dear Mr. Bainbridge:

Tonight, the San Joaquin County Tomato Growers' Association will meet in the Tracy Inn "for selection of a unit picking wage to be submitted to state labor authorities for final approval." In the past, such wage recommendations have received approval from your office, from Sacramento, from San Francisco, and from Washington, D.C.

Unilateral wage fixing by growers' organizations is clearly contrary to the provisions of Public Law 78, Section 503 ("...provision shall be made for consultation with agricultural employers and workers for the purpose of obtaining facts relevant to the supply of domestic farm workers and the wages paid such workers...")(emphasis added). Unilateral wage fixing is also clearly contrary to the policy directive issued by John E. Carr, Director of the California State Department of Employment, under date of June 4, 1959. Point #10 of Mr. Carr's directive reads, "We will listen to and work with unions and other public groups having a legitimate interest in the program..." Point #2 of Mr. Carr's directive reads, "Careful field work will be done to see that the 'prevailing wage' represents a level which will attract and retain domestic workers."

We are accordingly notifying you of our informed judgment as to the minimum tomato picking rate which will "attract and retain domestic workers." Although we have not been invited to participate in the deliberations of the San Joaquin Tomato Growers' Association, we have reason to believe the rate which this body will recommend tonight will be substantially below the level necessary to attract and retain our own local workers.

On behalf of the Stockton Division of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO, we recommend that the following rates prevail in the picking of round tomatoes in San Joaquin County in the year 1959.

1. First picking, average field: 18¢ per 50 pound box.
2. Second and third pickings, average fields: 20-25¢ per 50 pound box.
3. In below-average fields, the rate should be adjusted to such an extent a picker of average competence and diligence can make \$1.25 an hour.

We believe that the implementation of Point #2 in Mr. Carr's directive of June 4, 1959, requires the acceptance of such a wage schedule as that above.

We note that in a memorandum from you to Raul Aguilar of our staff, dated July 7, 1959, you ask our assistance "in informing domestic workers of the available job opportunities, and in referring such workers to the local office of the Department." If wages lower than those in the schedule above are determined by your office to "prevail" this season, we do not believe we can assist you in recruiting workers and do not believe we can reasonably be expected to do so. Our organization did not come into existence for the purpose of maintaining substandard wages and working conditions.

However, if the above wage schedule goes into effect, we believe we can be of very great assistance in filling available jobs with qualified domestic workers. Given the above wages, and given thirty days' notice, we believe we can fill the tomato-picking jobs in this county with domestic workers.

Yours truly,

Ed Williams,
President, Stockton Division

Dolores C. Huerta,
Secretary-Treasurer,
Stockton Division

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